

Fasting of the Tongue

Transcribed from talks by Shaykh Ahmad Jibril

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FASTING OF THE TONGUE

One of the courses you get out of fasting is not only depriving yourself from the stomach and private part desires that we all know about, but you also have to work on other prohibitions, especially matters that pertain to the tongue. One of the biggest courses in the university of Ramadhaan is training yourself to refrain from lying, oppression, backbiting, and all those tongue ailments in particular. There are many ailments, but those tongue ailments in particular, and we are going to go over this issue.

The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

لَيْسَ الصَّيَّامُ مِنَ الطَّعَامِ وَالشَّرَابِ إِنَّمَا الصَّيَّامُ مِنَ اللَّغْوِ وَالرَّفَثِ

In Mustadarak al-Haakim. Abu Hurayrah said the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said fasting is not just abstaining from food and drink, rather fasting is abstaining from idle and foul, vain and obscene speech.

That is all included in fasting. You all know the Hadith – if someone curses you or treats you in an improper, ignorant or foolish manner, you say:

إِنِّي صَائِمٌ

Let me say a side issue on this. The Hadith in Bukhari mentions it twice in one Hadith:

إِنِّي صَائِمٌ إِنِّي صَائِمٌ

I am fasting, I am fasting. Most people when they say it, you hear:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي صَائِمٌ

They change the statement into a Du'aa, which is not part of a Hadith. It is better to stick to the appropriate wording of the Hadith, which is:

إِنِّي صَائِمٌ

There are other Ahaadith pertaining to this matter.

مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ

In Sahih al-Bukhari. Whoever does not abandon falsehood in word and in action, then Allah has no need for him to leave his food and his drink.

In another Hadith in Sunan an-Nasaa'ee, Ibn Maajah and al-Haakim, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said perhaps a fasting person gets nothing out of his fast but hunger. In another narration which is only in Ibn Maajah, it says a fasting person attains nothing out of his fast but hunger and thirst. There are some people who get only hunger and thirst out of their fast.

All these Ahaadith and there are many more. Someone will say alright, you mentioned all these Ahaadith so if I curse someone, backbite someone or lie, I have negated my fast so I might as well go eat and drink. Some believe that and some really do that. What we say and we always reiterate is that you do not understand these Ahaadith like you and I understand them, or like I want to understand them – we understand them like they were meant to be understood. The 'Ulamaa mentioned and talked about this and actually, the Hanaabilah, the Shaafi'iyyah and everyone from the old generation who I read from said the same thing except the Dhaahiriyyah. The Dhaahiriyyah are those who take the texts and understand them in such an extreme apparent way, and they are too literal in their understanding. Everyone else said what one breaks and voids is not the fast, it is the reward – meaning he will lose the reward if he does any of these things. Depending on what he does, he gets sins, and to top that off not only does he get sins, but he loses the reward for his worship (according to whatever he did). Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal said if gossip and backbiting were to break the fast, none of us would have a fast.

Evil speech, lying, backbiting and gossip are all prohibited throughout the year, so why is it emphasised more so in Ramadhaan when one is fasting? Because you are doing something contrary to the wisdom and purpose of the worship you are engaged in. You are in a pure worship and you are trying to purify yourself, so you are doing something that defeats the purpose. It is because like we always say, in Ramadhaan the deeds are multiple folds, but that comes at a cost because sins are multiple folds as well. On an ordinary day, you get sins for gossip and backbiting. In Ramadhaan, it is deeper – you get more sins for that because of the holy days. Not only that, but you get stripped of the reward for that hard work you are doing – the Qiyaam, Salah and Ibaadah. Now do you understand why?

Someone says I lied and I ruined my fast, I am not getting reward out of it so I might as well eat and drink. What happened is you got the sins for whatever you did, you lost the reward of the Ibaadah and now you want to top that off by a super major sin of voiding your actual

fast? The point of these Ahaadith is to recruit you – to tell you that you have a lot of deeds and a lot of hard work that you are going to lose if you continue to do this type of sin. You have a lot at stake and this is a boot camp to straighten me and you up for the rest of the year, and then for the rest of our lives.

Some of the Salaf said the easiest part of fasting is leaving your food and your water. Wallahi that is true. The beauty of fasting is that it is a worship that continues on throughout the day (from pre-dawn until sunset) – it is a continuous and ongoing Ibaadah, meaning you get reward even while you are sleeping. That is until you backbite someone – then the Ibaadah stops (meaning the reward stops). Jaabir said if you fast – let your hearing fast, let your tongue fast from lying, let your limbs fast, do not harm neighbours. Everything has to fast.

In these Ahaadith that we mentioned, false speech includes all kinds of speech. It includes lying, backbiting, slandering, insulting, cursing, false testimony, accusing believers, and even yelling is something that should not be done in Ramadhaan. Each one of these is a topic to talk about for many Halaqaat. The tongue is a small muscle, but a deeply dangerous one. That is why the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam told us that one of the major matters that causes people entry to Jahannam is the tongue. The tongue is a killer, it is a ruiner and a destroyer. It could be one word that you say which attains the wrath of Allah and puts one seventy years into Hell. May Allah save you from that. And it could be that muscle you use to utter one word that makes you among the most successful.

Umar radhiallahu ‘anhu said I walked in on Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq radhiallahu ‘anhu one time while he was holding his tongue. He had his tongue in his hand and he is saying this destroyed me – my tongue destroyed me. What are you talking about Abu Bakr? Your tongue destroyed you? How did your tongue destroy you? The tongue that has done nothing but exert all its efforts in support of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam. You Abu Bakr say your tongue destroyed you when you are going to be called by every single one of the eight gates of Jannah? The man who the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam smiled to his leadership in Salah, on the morning that he sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam died in. The best man after the Prophets, radhiallahu ‘anhu. But they used to hold themselves accountable on a high standard.

Do not get the perception that slander and backbiting is only by tongues and lips. It could be by a wink or a gesture, and it only gets worse on Twitter, Facebook and internet forums. Does that count? Yes that does count. Someone might say but I was disguised by the screen and nobody knew.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى ﴿العلق: ١٤﴾

Knows he not that Allah does see (what he does)? (Surat al-‘Alaq: 14)

Have you not heard the Qur'an? Does he not know that Allah sees?

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾ الْحَاقَّةُ: ١٨

That Day shall you be brought to Judgment, not a secret of you will be hidden. (Surat al-Haaqqah: 18)

On that Day you shall be exposed to view – no secrets. Now you can keep it a secret, but no secret of yours will remain hidden on that Day.

...سُكَّتْ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ الزَّخْرَفُ: ١٩

Their evidence will be recorded, and they will be questioned! (Surat az-Zukhruf: 19)

There is no difference between tongue and gesture, and Twitter and Facebook. You will be held accountable for all that.

Ramadhaan came to let this awareness and fear of Allah surface in our hearts. Yes there are some days left in Ramadhaan, but it is never too late. Try this from now until the end of Ramadhaan – every night before you go to sleep, do the checks and balances on the activities of your tongue for that day. If you lied, mocked, slandered, cursed, said derogatory words or were involved in backbiting, set aside five dollars or twenty dollars (whatever you can do) for each time you made a mistake. After a week or by the end of Ramadhaan, you will see you washed your tongue out. If you continue from now until the end of Ramadhaan with that method, you will continue Bi'ithnillahi Ta'aala for the rest of your life. You will see a difference in yourself.

We are not expecting you to be an angel but when you stumble, you jump up with repentance (Tawbah) and continue on the right path. Ramadhaan is to instill god consciousness, mindfulness of Allah and piety in you – that is Taqwa. A strong Imaanic immune system so that you fear Allah in every word you say – that is Taqwa. I want you to imagine that someone knows his boss has installed some secret cameras, or as a lot of people know – the government has their cars, phones and houses tapped, and they have cameras by their houses. A lot of people know that, so they are watching every exact word. Does he ever forget there is a wiretap or that his boss has installed a hidden camera? He never forgets that and he is always on alert – it is in his subconscious. How do we forget Raqeeb and 'Ateed?

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴿١٨﴾ ق: ١٨

Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it). (Surat Qaaf: 18)

Do not say like some people say – when I talked about him, I got it off my chest. No, keeping whatever you want to say in your chest is better than having it on your register before Allah on The Judgment Day. Muslims have different ways of thinking.

Ibn Mas'ood said I do not know anything more worthy of a long prison sentence than my tongue. That is the only thing that is worthy of going to prison. In Sulh al-Hudaybiyyah, Umar said a few words that he deemed were out of line. He was attempting to convince the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam to change his mind so he can fight Quraysh, but at that time the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was not ordered to fight them. Umar wanted to change his mind and the purpose of him saying what he said was because he wanted to die for the sake of Allah. He deemed it inappropriate and years and years later as he got older, he said after that I did so much deeds in repentance and I still do ask Allah to forgive me for that which I said.

Your tongue may be the determining factor in your ultimate destiny. May Allah protect you from Jahannam. The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said whoever can guarantee to me what is between his lips and what is between his legs, I can guarantee to him Jannah. If you look at marital problems, problems between blood brothers, problems between brothers in the community, killing and many other problems – the tongue has a major role to play. If you are wondering why your Imaan is weak, one of the first things you have to start with is checking your tongue out. The biggest source of strengthening your Imaan is your tongue.

The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam taught us to say good or remain silent. That is not a Haraam or Halaal standard, but that is a standard above that. If it is good then I am going to say it, and if it is neutral I am going to keep it to myself. The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam referred to some of the tongue ailments as Moobiqaat (موبقات). Do you know what Moobiqaat means? Doomers and destroyers. He put some tongue ailments in the same category as Moobiqaat like usury, black magic and killing, and one of them is accusing women in their honour.

In Shu'bal-Imaan (شعب الإيمان) by al-Bayhaqi:

مَرْحَبًا بِكَ مِنْ بَيْتٍ ، مَا أَعْظَمَكَ وَأَعْظَمُ حُرْمَتَكَ ، وَلَلْمُؤْمِنُ أَعْظَمُ حُرْمَةً
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْكَ

When the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam saw the Ka’bah after not seeing it for a long time, he looked at it and he talked to the Ka’bah. He said how honourable are you, but the honour and sanctity of a believer is more honourable than you. Then he said Allah has prohibited the blood and the honour and wealth of the believers.

Let me tell those people who have loose slanderous tongues what this Hadith means, in a basic way in which they have probably never heard it before. Would anyone curse the Ka’bah? Everyone holds it sacred and it is beyond the imagination of a Muslim to curse the Ka’bah. Would anyone take a sledgehammer, go to the Ka’bah and try to take it down? Or take a hammer and chisel, go to the Ka’bah and try to take it down and demolish it? That is stuff most of the major sinners of this Ummah do not even imagine. What would you do if someone cursed or tried to demolish the Ka’bah? Speaking about the honour of a believer is a bigger sin than speaking about the Ka’bah or cursing the Ka’bah. Taking down the Ka’bah stone by stone is a smaller sin than killing a believer. The honour and sanctity of a Muslim is big in the eyes of Allah and the righteous believers.

When you stand before Allah on The Judgment Day and He asks you why you said that about your brother, you have an opportunity to defend yourself. Why did you say this about your sister? Why did you say this about those righteous people? That brother that was in prison and those people who are defending the Ummah – why did you say that about them? You get the opportunity to answer. O Allah, I found it on Google? I ask you by Allah, is that going to stand before Allah? That does not even stand in the most oppressive of manmade courts today, to stand before the court of ‘Allaamul-Ghuyoob, Al-Hakam and Al-‘Adl. I found it on a forum or on a Twitter, so I went passing it along? Is that a defence you can put before Allah?

Al-Fudhayl Ibn ‘Iyaadh said I know some of my friends who would remain silent from a Friday to a Friday – meaning from one Friday to another Friday, they would not say anything but some Qur’an, Dhikr and Ibaadah. They protected their tongues. Abu Na’eem and Ibn Abi Dunya narrated that Ibn Abbaas spoke to his tongue and he told his tongue – speak good and you will succeed, otherwise you will regret it. He was warning his tongue and reminding himself that it is a dangerous muscle. Ibn Abbaas said it reached me that there is no bigger enemy to one than his own tongue on The Judgment Day.

Let your example be the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Anas Ibn Maalik said he served him for ten years and he never said Uff to him. That is how you really know someone – when you live with them and you interact with them. Anas even said that sometimes he did not do stuff the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam told him to do. He never said Uff to him, yelled or screamed at him or cursed him.

Get in the habit of contemplating what you say before you utter it. Al-Hasan al-Basri said one who does not restrain his tongue does not know his Deen. Whatever words you have, they are your prisoner. You have got them as a prisoner and you have control over them.

Feel good that they are your prisoner. Once you let them out, you are their prisoner. You have become a prisoner to them and you have to handle their consequences in this Dunya and before Allah.

You find many who are willing to leave drinking, adultery and fornication, usury and other sins, but they cannot restrain the tongue. The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

إِذَا أَصْبَحَ ابْنُ آدَمَ فَإِنَّ الْأَعْضَاءَ كُلَّهَا تُكْفِّرُ اللِّسَانَ ، فَتَقُولُ : اتَّقِ اللَّهَ
فِينَا ، فَإِنَّمَا نَحْنُ بِكَ ، فَإِنْ اسْتَقَمْتَ اسْتَقَمْنَا ، وَإِنْ اعْوَجَجْتَ اعْوَجَجْنَا

When you wake up, the limbs tell the tongue – fear Allah in us. If you do good, we will be in good status. If you do bad, we are going to be bad.

They are going to fry because of the tongue. It is amazing to see how many would never go near major sins, yet they unleash their tongues on the believers day and night. People who you look at and say Allahumma Baarik – the Miswaak in the mouth, the long beard, the beautiful Hijaab, in and out of the Masjid, 'Umrah and Hajj every other day. All that hard work and they are trying to donate it to people by what they do on their tongues.

In Al-Awsat (الأوسط), at-Tabaraani narrated a Hadith from Baraa' Ibn 'Aazib radhiyallahu anhu:

الرِّبَا ثَلَاثَةٌ وَسَبْعُونَ بَابًا أَيْسَرُهَا مِثْلَ أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الرَّجُلُ أُمَّهُ ، وَإِنَّ أَرْبَى الرِّبَا
عَرَضُ الرَّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ

In Mustadarak al-Haakim, he said this is in accordance with Bukhari and Muslim. I know some scholars said it is weak, but I believe it is authentic. Ribaa is seventy three sections or in another narration seventy two – the least of it in sins is similar to one having sexual relationship with his mother. Please listen to this. Ribaa is seventy two or seventy three levels or categories, and the least of it is equivalent in sins to one having sexual relationship with his mother, and the worst form of Ribaa is one dishonouring a Muslim. What do you mean O Prophet of Allah sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam? Meaning that one having sex with his mother is less of a sin than dishonouring a Muslim. Usury is less of a sin than dishonouring a Muslim. A lesson for those who call themselves refuters, the modernists who have the whispers of the devils, and the masses of the Ummah who are ignorant in this matter.

Be careful with your tongue because most of the punishment in Jahannam is from it. Be careful of the tongue because most of the punishment in your grave is from it. Wallahi, you

do not want that punishment in the grave. Sometimes you tell someone to stop talking about that sister or that brother and they say but brother, it is true. It is on the internet, go ask her ex-fiancée, go ask the local Imaam or go ask the community. Let us assume for our purpose that what you are saying is true. We are not arguing that – that is exactly what we are talking about! That is Gheebah (غيبه) and you have no business talking about it. It is a major sin when it is true! Now if it is not true, that is called Buhtaan (بهتان) and that is another tongue ailment. Like I said, each one of these are ailments you can talk about for Halaqaat.

Some sit and speak about their brothers, and fill their stomachs with the flesh of their brothers.

...أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ... ﴿الحجرات﴾:

١٢ ﴿

Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). (Surat al-Hujuraat: 12)

After a hefty feast on the flesh of Muslims, one goes to the Masjid and makes Salah or does 'Umrah, and then after that he or she thinks they are going to sleep in their grave like a bride or bridegroom.

After the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam passed by a grave, he said a man in that grave is being punished and he is being punished because of something that his tongue said. Some justify it and say but I will go say it to his face. If you go say it to his face, then you went from one sin to another. You moved from backbiting to harming your brother! If you want to go to his face, tell him in wisdom and kindness and advise him (being a mirror to your brother), then go do that. That is enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and we want you to do that. Go tell him that is wrong brother, you cannot do that. Try to guide him and help him, or tell those he will listen to.

Let us assume a brother did fornication or adultery – who are you to talk about it or repeat it? Who are you to confront him, unless it is to make Naseehah and advice? Are you the Khaleefah? If you have a Khaleefah, you can go to the Khaleefah so he can lash him. Otherwise, that is it – you do not mention it. If you are raising the matter to the Khaleefah then go ahead, and if you are giving him advice then go ahead. One needs to either advise him in a kind and sincere way, or put a lid on it. Once we get the Khaleefah, then you can tell the Khaleefah and he will do what he has to do.

Among the reasons harming a Muslim with the tongue is a big deal is because it is one of the most hurtful things to Muslim brothers and sisters. It gets many depressed and agonised for days and weeks, and sometimes for a lifetime. Today not only do I want to talk about those who do that gossiping, backbiting, lying and slandering, but I want you to be happy if you are on the receiving end. Giggle when you hear someone talk about you. Smile and be happy. Can you imagine all the freebie reward you get out of the person who slandered you, and all the sins you are going to put on him? Deeds you never worked for and never expected. That is why the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam called them bankrupt – because they have a lot of deeds but they are going to give them to you. Not only are they going to give them to you, but your sins are going to pile on them. Remember in the Tawheed class we spoke on Qantarah (قنطرة). After all the obstacles and after the Siraat, right when your foot is going to be on the front steps of Jannah, those who have disputes amongst each other have to go to a detour. They have to go al-Qantarah and settle the disputes before they enter Jannah. Some get their deeds lowered and some get their deeds raised.

When someone complained to al-Fudhayl Ibn 'Iyyaadh and said someone is talking bad about me, he said he is pouring good on you – he is pouring deeds on you. How many times have we spoken on this subject in Khutub and Duroos, and someone comes and says Wallah Shaykh I needed to hear that. It agonises the believers and that is why it is so big of a sin. From now on if you are on the receiving end, be happy. If you are spoken about, do not be depressed and sad. You know that Laylat al-Qadar that person stayed up all night in – you get that Laylat al-Qadar out of him. Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Mahdi said such stunning words. He said if I did not hate that Allah be disobeyed on this earth, I would love for people to talk about me, gossip about me and slander me. What is better than getting deeds you never expected when you are standing before Allah? Your own mum would not give you those deeds. I still remember the setting in 1994 when I read it for the first time in the third volume of Faydh Al-Qadeer (فيض القدير) by Mannaawi. I still remember the year and the setting and I will never forget it, because it brings happiness to your heart.

Al-Hasan al-Basri heard someone talking about him, so he went to the market and bought some dates. Why Hasan al-Basri? Someone is talking about you – he is slandering and backbiting you so why do you go take him dates? The man asked him that question. He said you gave me your deeds so I am going to give you something in return. I am going to add to that and say al-Hasan al-Basri should have told him what I gave you is nothing compared to what you gave me.

Some people like to give their Ramadhaans, their night of Laylat al-Qadar or their Hajj away. Listen to this story. A blood brother and a sister went to Hajj, and the brother left his wife behind. She wanted to stay behind because she has a lot of kids, so she stayed behind at home. During the Hajj, the brother and sister were walking in some place and the brother

said let me just quickly buy this gift for my wife. The sister was in a rush and she said one simple word about his wife. They were not even on bad terms, they were on good terms but it was just some words she let out. In her country, the wife saw a dream – the one that did not go to Hajj. She saw a dream that her sister in law gave her Hajj to her as a present. She called the Shaykh up – Shaykh I had this very weird dream that my sister in law gave me her Hajj. He said she must have said something, backbit or gossiped about you, and her Hajj is a reward for you – that is what you are going to end up getting. When her sister in law returned, she told her the dream. They were on very good terms and the sister in law admitted it, apologised and asked her for forgiveness. They were on good terms, but one word and she was going to give the entire Hajj to her for that! Imagine sentences, articles, constant harassment and years of feuding. Imagine how much reward they are going to lose.

Wallahi, speaking about Muslims in a bad way is not an easy game. I am going to tell you it may be decade's worth of deeds to compensate for a few words you said about a Muslim. A few verbal words, but it may take a lifetime's worth of deeds to compensate for them. Someone might say come on now, you are exaggerating and you are basing on this on dreams. I say I do not base it on dreams, but take it from the perspective of the harm you inflict on Muslims and take it more so from this Hadith. When the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was about to marry Safiyyah radhiallahu 'anha, Aishah radhiallahu 'anha said she is short. In another narration, she did not say she is short but she just gestured that she is short. A simple hand movement and one word to say she is short – that is all it was. What did the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam tell her? The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam told her if you were to put that in an ocean, it would change the ocean. Do you ever reflect on these Ahaadith when you read them? In Sunan Abi Dawood:

لَقَدْ قُلْتُ كَلِمَةً لَوْ مُزِجْتُ بِمَاءِ الْبَحْرِ لَمَزَجَتْهُ

Aishah radhiallahu 'anha, put that gesture or that word in the Pacific Ocean and it will change the colour of the Pacific Ocean. What it means is that it may cost you the Pacific Ocean's worth of deeds to compensate for that one word.

After hearing this, will you not reconsider everything you say, contemplate it and think about it before you say it? And you my brother and my sister on the receiving end, rejoice to the mountains and oceans of deeds that you are going to get, which your mum, your dad and your child would not even give you. You get it from the person who gossiped about you and backbit you.

You see those who get together after Taraweeh and they bring one Muslim after another – slandering and backbiting them. They start with the Imaam and the guy to their right and the guy to their left. They sit and laugh and then they get into politics and they slander men whose souls are possibly now in green birds, or on their way to being in green birds. What

happens to all their deeds? That Taraweeh and that Qiyaam – they gave it as a gift to people. Not that one night only, but possibly for years – they are going to give it as a gift to someone.

When they told Aishah there are people who speak ill about Abu Bakr and Umar after their death, she said Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala cut their deeds – their deeds stopped when they died and this is one of the means by which Allah wanted to extend more deeds to them. Abdullah Ibn al-Mubaarak said if I were to slander or backbite someone, it would be no other than my mother and my father, because I do not know anyone more worthy of reward than my mother and father.

In slander, Gheebah and those matters, you are either spoken about, you are the speaker or you are listening. If you are spoken about, we said enjoy the reward and do not be sad anymore. From today when someone speaks about you, do not feel sad. Remember the free Hajj you are getting, remember the free Ramadhaan you are getting, and remember the oceans and mountains of deeds that are going to come at you. Remember those deeds that are going to swipe you off your feet to Firdaws and you did not even have to work for them. As for those who speak, we already mentioned the Ahaadith warning about that. Now there is one who is listening and that is what I want to get to. Those who are listening – you have to withdraw as soon as possible or advise that person to be quiet. If they be quiet, you can continue sitting with them. If he does not stop, then you leave. You the listener are part of it and you will be a partner to him because Allah said in similar matters:

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مَثَلْتُمْ ۖ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿النساء: ١٤٠﴾

And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this Qur'an) that when you hear the Verses of Allah being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them. Surely, Allah will collect the hypocrites and disbelievers all together in Hell. (Surat an-Nisaa': 140)

إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مَثَلْتُمْ

(But if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them.

If you listen to them, you are a partner to them. Be above and beyond all that and defend the honour of your brother or your sister. Guard the honour of a Muslim and Allah will guard your face on The Judgment Day.

مَنْ رَدَّ عَنْ عَرَضِ أَخِيهِ رَدَّ اللَّهُ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ النَّارَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

In Sunan at-Tirmidhi. If you are sitting in a setting and they begin to gossip and backbite, if you defend the honour of your brother then Allah will defend your face from Jahannam.

Be like Abu Ayyub the killer of rumours. Allah revealed Qur'an about him and his wife, for the stance they took to kill a rumour that inflicted the Ummah. Aishah radhiallahu 'anha – our mother and the definition of honour gets accused in her honour. Muhammad Ibn Ishaaq said that when people began to speak on the honour of Aishah, word got to Abu Ayyub (his name is Khaalid Ibn Zayd al-Ansaari radhiallahu 'anhu). Look at the discussion they had. He told his wife Umm Ayyub, if you were alone with that man in the desert like Aishah was, would you do anything? She said no way. He said Aishah is better than you, she would not have done anything. End of discussion and they killed the rumour. She did not say but Aishah is younger and Aishah is better looking, or I do not believe it but it is a possibility. No, it is done – Aishah would have never done it. Allah revealed Qur'an in the honour of Abu Ayyub and his wife.

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ

مُبِينٌ ﴿النور: ١٢﴾

Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it (the slander) think good of their own people and say: "This (charge) is an obvious lie?" (Surat an-Noor: 12)

Whenever you hear rumours or slander about your Muslim brother or sister with nothing to back them up, tell them you are a liar. This is an obvious lie so be quiet. You can do it in a good way and stop the rumour. Kill it and do not pass it on. This verse says two things – number one is think good internally, and number two is take it a step further and say this is a sheer lie. Just because something was said, it does not give you the right to pass it on. Be the one who kills the rumour. If you are a listener, stop those who backbite, slander and harm Muslims. Do you ever see anyone gossip and slander to himself? If me, you and all the other brothers and sisters do not listen, he is not going to sit in his room and gossip and backbite.

The one who brings you the news of what was said about others, what is going on with others and Nameemah (نميمة) – he is a Nammaam (نمام) and a Qattaat (قتات). Do not think

those who do that Nameemah confide in you. You might enjoy it when he is talking about others, but it is only a matter of time before he turns and starts talking about you to others. The one who spoke about you originally was shooting blanks and he missed you, since you did not hear about it and it did not hit your heart. You will get the reward, but it did not hurt you in this life because you did not know about it. The one who brought you what was said about you is like someone taking the gun of that person and helping him aim so it will pierce your heart. Both are worse than each other. Yahya Ibn Katheer said those who spread rumours and the words of others, and gossip and slander – what they do in moments is more evil than what black magicians do in years.

Imaam Ahmad went to visit a man who was sick. He asked the man who was sick – did the doctor come check up on you? The man said yes. He has been sick for a while, so Imaam Ahmad said well who checked up on you? The ill person named the doctor and Imaam Ahmad said try this other doctor. On the spot, Imaam Ahmad said Astaghfirullah Al-‘Adheem, I just did Gheebah. Just because he preferred one doctor over another, because of the high standards he holds his tongue accountable to, he deemed it that he was talking about the other doctor.

Whenever you want to speak ill of a Muslim, remember your own mistakes. People are flooded up to their heads in mistakes, but they want to talk about others. Put yourself in the shoes of that other person and think about how he is going to feel when you talk ill about him or her.

Finally, some say I want to repent and I do not want that person to take my deeds. Number one – you apologise to them. If you know they are open hearted, they will accept it and it will not cause more harm, go to them and apologise to them. If you think it will make matters worse, do not do it because the whole purpose of this whole matter is to eliminate hardships and problems among Muslims. If you know it is going to create more hardship, make Du’aa for him, speak good of him in some settings and give charity in his name. That is the best thing to do. If you were in a setting where you mentioned him in bad, go in a similar setting and try to mention him in good or make Du’aa for him. That is number one and that way you have given him his right back. Now you deal with the right to Allah, which is three prongs. You say Astaghfirullah, you plan on never doing that again, and then you regret your past. Inshaa Allah, Allah will forgive you, and you train yourself so that you will not do it again.